

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 67

By Brown

A RESOLUTION to commend Captain James W. Cunningham for his meritorious service as a Trooper in the Tennessee Highway Patrol.

WHEREAS, It is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens by serving as members of the Tennessee Highway Patrol; and

WHEREAS, Captain James W. Cunningham is one such exceptional person, a dedicated professional who has paved the way for the many other African American officers who have followed in his footsteps; and

WHEREAS, Captain Cunningham was hired by the Tennessee Highway Patrol on June 1, 1966, at the age of 25, thus becoming only the fourth African American to serve as a State Trooper; and

WHEREAS, He worked for ten years in the Driver License Division, and despite not being allowed to work the road because of his race, became the first African American to achieve the rank of Sergeant upon his promotion to that position in 1973; and

WHEREAS, Captain Cunningham was transferred to the Financial Responsibility Division in 1976, where he worked for four years picking up driver licenses and vehicle registrations; and

WHEREAS, Having attended Chattanooga State Technical Community College and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Captain Cunningham matriculated at the Traffic Institute of the Center for Public Safety at Northwestern University in 1980, and graduated nine months later with a degree in Business Administration; and

WHEREAS, Upon his graduation, Captain Cunningham returned to Nashville, where he served in the Planning and Research Division of the Highway Patrol; and

WHEREAS, His tenure in that division was brief, due to his promotion to Lieutenant in 1981, at which time he was transferred to the Chattanooga District, where he would serve as Field Lieutenant from 1981 through 1989; and

WHEREAS, Captain Cunningham returned to the Nashville District in order to work in Facilities Management, and was promoted to Captain in September of 1990, soon thereafter to be entrusted with the responsibility of administering the Tennessee Occupational Safety Health Act for the Highway Patrol; and

WHEREAS, His many accomplishments aside, Captain Cunningham is fortunate to share both love and companionship with his wife, Annie Doris Cunningham, and their two sons, Michael and Bryant D.; he looks to the love he received from his parents, Lillian and Belton Cunningham, as a model for his own family; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his stellar service as a Tennessee State Trooper, Captain Cunningham also served our country as a member of the United States military from 1959 through 1963; and

WHEREAS, Upon completion of his military service, Captain Cunningham returned home to work first for the Tennessee Valley Authority and then the Chattanooga Police Department; and

WHEREAS, Captain Cunningham is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and throughout his career has created opportunities for those who have followed him that were not readily available to those who came before; and

WHEREAS, He should be specially recognized for all that he has done for the Tennessee Highway Patrol and the citizens of this great State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby pause to honor and commend Captain James W. Cunningham on his many years of service to the people of the State of Tennessee as an officer in the Tennessee Highway Patrol. We commend him for his bravery in the face of institutional opposition, and we wish him every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.